

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 03819 091908Z

63

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 TRSE-00 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 OMB-01 RSR-01

/125 W

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R 091815Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8044

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 3819

E.O. 11652: GDS, DECLASSIFY ON 12/31/79.

TAGS: PFOR; BE

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER

1. I CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER LEBURTON JULY 9 BECAUSE, AS I EXPLAINED TO HIM, I WAS ABOUT TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATION AND WISHED TO ASSURE MYSELF OF THE CONFIDENCE AND UNDERSTANDING WITH WHICH OUR COUNTRIES WILL APPROACH, DURING THE NEXT FEW CRUCIAL MONTHS, THE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF THE U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIPS. LEBURTON SAID THAT HE WAS AWARE THAT READJUST-  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 03819 091908Z

MENTS IN US-EUROPEAN RELATIONS WERE CALLED FOR; BUT HE EMPHASIZED

THAT THESE COULD SURELY BE MADE IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP, (DANS LE CADRE D'AMITIE). HE APPEARED PARTICULARLY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE MONETARY SITUATION AND WITH WHAT, IN THIS CONNECTION, HE DESCRIBED AS AN ATTITUDE OF WITHDRAWAL (ABSTENTION) ON THE PART OF THE US. HE SAID THAT THE US SEEMED DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH ITS OWN DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND THAT HE SAW THE DANGER OF THIS CONCERN QTE SPILLING OVER UNQUTE INTO OTHER SECTORS OF OUR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS. HE REFERRED TO THE MANSFIELD AMENDMENT. I ASSURED HIM THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, LIKE THOSE WHICH PRECEDED IT, WAS COMMITTED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF US FORCES IN EUROPE AT CURRENT LEVELS, WITH NO THOUGHT OF REDUCTION WITHOUT NEGOTIATED REDUCTIONS ON THE PART OF THE OTHER SIDE.

2. AS FAR AS DETENTE WAS CONCERNED, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE BELGIANS HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT IT. WHEN I ASKED IF HE HAD ANY RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED US/SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, HE SAID THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, HE WELCOMED IT. HE REPEATED THAT BELGIAN CONCERNS WERE RELATED PRIMARILY TO THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN THE US. HE SAID THAT BELGIUM WAS A SMALL POWER WHICH DEPENDED, AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DEPEND, UPON THE STRENGTH OF THE US IN THE COMMON DEFENSE. THEREFORE, BELGIUM LOOKED FOR A STRONG AND DECISIVE UNITED STATES.

3. I REPLIED THAT I WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL COPE SUCCESSFULLY WITH OUR DOMESTIC PROBLEMS; AND THAT THE STRENGTH OF OUR INSTITUTIONS INSURED THE CONTINUITY OF OUR FOREIGN POLICIES.

4. I SAID TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT WE WERE SOMETIMES TOLD OF CONCERN IN EUROPE THAT THE US HAD FAILED TO CONSULT ADEQUATELY WITH ITS ALLIES BEFORE TAKING DECISIONS TO CONCERN TO THEM. I OBSERVED THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, WE TOOK VERY SERIOUSLY OUR OBLIGATION TO CONSULT AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE LOOKED TO EUROPE TO MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DELIBERATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE U.S.-EUROPEAN RELATIONSHIP. EUROPE HAS ONLY TO STATE ITS CASE AND THUS TO MAKE AN INPUT INTO THE DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF US/EUROPEAN RELATIONS WHICH WE HAD PROPOSED. LEBURTON FULLY AGREED.

5. HIS CHEF DE CABINET, HERMAN NOPPEN, WHO WAS PRESENT, NOTED  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BRUSSE 03819 091908Z

THAT EUROPE'S WEAKNESS WAS ITS INABILITY TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE. LEBURTON AGREED, NOTING THAT A EUROPE IN THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION, WITH A LONG WAY TO GO TOWARDS ITS REALIZATION, WAS SENSITIVE TO UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT AMERICAN STRENGTH AND LEADERSHIP. EUROPE LOOKS TO THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS SECURITY, AND ANY SIGN OF INDECISION ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES HAS GRAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR EUROPE.

6. I RAISED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE QUESTION OF BURDEN  
SHARING, NOTING THAT A GESTURE FROM EUROPE, REGARDLESS OF THE FORM  
TAKEN, WOULD HAVE GREAT PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN WASHINGTON  
AND WOULD STRENGTHEN THE PRESIDENT'S HAND IN CONGRESS. THE PRIME  
MINISTER SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THIS  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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